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nature. We mourn over his sorrows ; we feel the bitterness of his fate ; we are ready to weep with him over the loss of his dearest friends, and the blight of his fondest hopes ; and we deeply lament that the consolations of Christianity could not be offered to his noble spirit. But we still thank God for this bright example of the dignity, power, and glory of our nature ; for the virtues which sprang from no teaching ; for the far-reaching views, and the sublime aspirations, for the brightness which one noble mind, from its own fountain of light, was able to shed on the night of paganism.

ART. III. — *The Letters of CHARLES LAMB, with a Sketch of his Life.* By THOMAS NOON TALFOURD, One of his Executors. In Two Volumes. London ; Edward Moxon, Dover Street. 1837.

MR. TALFOURD will receive the thanks of all lovers of Charles Lamb's exquisite genius, for this timely contribution to our knowledge of his character and private life. Himself a poet of commanding fame ; the most successful tragic writer of the age ; a brilliant orator, a great lawyer, a leading statesman ; he has gracefully stepped aside from his brilliant path of renown, to scatter a few fragrant flowers upon the grave of his departed friend. Amidst the press of manifold and exacting avocations, he has found time to execute, with the warmth of heartfelt enthusiasm, the task which love and reverence of Lamb's rare intellectual endowments induced him to accept.

The thread of narrative, which runs through these volumes like a thread of gold in a tissue of embroidery, is all that the most fastidious taste can require. In the exquisite selection of words, in the melodious construction of sentences, in the ornamental work of a rich and gorgeous imagination, Mr. Talfourd's pure style is unsurpassed. The few and almost unimportant events of Lamb's life are delightfully told, and the occasional notices of his friends and contemporaries are conceived and expressed in a spirit of cordial sympathy with all that is excellent and admirable in every variety of genius. This trait is carried almost to a faulty excess. Mr. Talfourd's praise is too indiscriminately lavished on all the members of

that coterie of poets, of which Coleridge and Wordsworth were the most distinguished ornaments. The genius and influence of these two celebrated men he has overrated ; their faults he has disguised under the drapery of most enchanting eulogy. He has also exaggerated, in many respects, the literary abilities of Lamb. Led by a pardonable partiality for his lamented friend, he has assigned him a higher rank among the great writers of his age than any, except a small circle of his contemporaries, have allowed, and certainly much higher than posterity will concede.

The truth is, Lamb was a singularly imperfect man. His peculiar genius was the strange product of a highly artificial state of society. He was made up of whims and humors, that could only be developed in the midst of a great capital. London was his paradise. The shops and streets, the lights and crowds of that vast metropolis, afforded perpetual excitement to his fantastic thoughts. With the beauties of rural nature he had little or no sympathy. Like Leigh Hunt, he felt that a great mountain was a great impostor. The snugness and comforts of city apartments were essential to his existence. In these respects he was a thorough cockney. He carried his metropolitan partialities to as absurd an extreme, as his friend Wordsworth his love of rustic simplicity. With such narrow and one-sided feelings, Charles Lamb was not the man to sympathize with the great philanthropic schemes of the age. He clung with invincible tenacity to every thing near him ; he had no care to spend on objects or interests that had no bearing on his personal welfare. The vast political topics, which have agitated the minds of men for the last fifty years, passed over him like the idle wind, which he regarded not. But his indifference to them was not the growth of a sublime philosophy, in whose comprehensive view the fleeting interests of an age are reduced to their just proportions in the great picture of human affairs. He was incapable of travelling beyond the narrow sphere in which he lived, and moved, and had his being. He was in the habit of doing systematic and gross injustice to the charitable schemes of humane men to soften the ills of poverty, and bestow the blessings of religion on the benighted ; and yet he was personally the most amiable of men, and spared no pains or expense to relieve a miserable object, who had once attracted his regard.

The place which Lamb holds in English literature, is altogether unique and peculiar; but the sphere of his excellence is limited. In the first place, he was no poet. The pieces of verse published in his works, with one or two exceptions, are below mediocrity. His mind was too whimsical for sustained beauty, within the severe limitations of poetry. It was ever wandering into some fantastic train of thought; some out-of-the-way analogy, unfit for the serious muse. He had but little dramatic talent; his attempts in the theatrical way proved signal and disastrous failures. Indeed, it is plain enough, that to conceive and represent a character dramatically, requires a steadiness of intellect, a firmness of purpose, a power of changing places with imaginary personages, which never belonged to Charles Lamb. His imagination laid hold of oddities of character with wonderful readiness; and he described, not represented, them with truth and wit. But he did not, and could not, bring a consistent being, with the attributes of humanity, before us, and exhibit it in all the varieties of action and passion. Even his farce of "Mr. H." is the most undramatic and extravagant of farces. The joke is too hard pressed, and long drawn, to be thoroughly enjoyed even in the closet. His play of "John Woodville" has a few fine poetical passages, and some happy imitations of old English dramatists; but it shows little originality, and no talent for the stage.

But in his own walk he was unrivalled. The short, humorous essay he carried to a point of excellence never before attained. His style is ever happy and original; his wit, of the rarest and most pungent description. The native peculiarities of his mind appear, fresh, racy, and delightful. The love of quaint conceits, which was a part of his nature, was increased by his enthusiastic study of the early English authors, who furnished his mind with its most genial sustenance; and his easy flow of expression and pithy language received a certain antique coloring from the same source. His wit, clothed in this curious garb, comes upon the mind with the most irresistible effect. We regard it as something singular, something remote from every thing else within our knowledge, and yet wholly free from affectation. His mind sympathized so completely with his favorite writers, that he became almost their contemporary, and poured out his rich drollery in their quaint ex-

pressions, with the same natural gush of imagination and whim, as they would have done themselves. It is not easy to say in what his wit mainly consists. Certainly it does not depend for its effect upon single brilliant sallies ; upon pointed antithesis ; upon repartee. It is rather a quality, a flavor, with which all his thoughts and images are impregnated. It is the concentrated fragrance of a thousand scattered perfumes. The senses are delighted with the united sweets, but the several ingredients escape the minutest analysis. If we say that his perception of the ludicrous is his strongest point, we speedily find ourselves in the wrong. Others have this power to a greater extent than he, without a millionth part of his wit. He is constantly punning ; but that is not the secret. Some of his puns are more execrable than any that have been perpetrated in Philadelphia. Mr. Talfourd has printed some at the end of his second volume, which sound almost idiotic. His wit is not the perception of ludicrous images ; it is not a play upon words ; it is not the sudden exhibition of unexpected relations ; but it is something wholly inseparable from the texture of his mind, and his habits of association, and assuming all the outward forms, of which language is capable. It is a subtle spirit, pervading all his writings, and reaching the reader's mind by a thousand different avenues. We can neither seize it nor escape from it.

The literary opinions of Lamb must generally be severely scrutinized. Neither his moral nor intellectual qualities were such as fitted him to be a catholic judge of other men's productions. Several of his criticisms are exquisitely conceived and expressed. His remarks on Shakspeare's *Othello* are admirable, but not philosophical or profound. But his elaborate defence of the dissolute drama of Charles the Second's time is an astounding absurdity. It shows an incapacity of judging of the demoralizing power, which a depraved literature exercises upon the lowest passions of our nature, which we should wonder at in a child, or else a moral insensibility to the disastrous consequences of that power, almost miraculous. His ridicule of the moral precision of our age, in relation to that most licentious school of writers, falls harmless to the ground. The age is right, only that it does not go far enough in its reprobation of dissolute literature ; and Lamb is wrong, utterly wrong. His opinions upon this point will take a high place on the long list of the absurdities of literary men. The

same singular perversion of taste is shown in many of his selections from the dramatists. Several scenes, taken from those authors, avowedly for their rare beauty of thought and expression, are such as no man would choose to let his sister or daughter read ; such as no man of decency would put into a woman's hand, unless he wished to be excluded from respectable society. Obscenity is just as bad in an old English drama as in a modern French novel. Filth is filth wherever it is found, and no glittering paradox can remove its native deformity. But many of the opinions which he expressed in his letters, on the literary merits of his contemporaries, are singularly clear and correct. In his correspondence with Coleridge, the bombastic absurdities, and the cloudy vagaries of that over-estimated writer, are handled without ceremony ; and some of the admirers of Coleridge will be astonished at the boldness, with which Lamb ridicules his false brilliancy and oracular mysticism. The same freedom he used with the frequent tediousness and commonplace platitudes of Southey.

Turning from the literary character of Lamb, to his private life, as exhibited in these volumes, we find it marked by as strong peculiarities as his writings. Though indifferent, as we have said, to the benevolent projects of the day, his affections for those about him were strong and tender. The amiable qualities of his heart endeared him to many, not only of different but of opposite characters. He had a strange facility in passing over the disagreeable things in his associates, and fastening only on those traits which pleased him. This was partly owing to his indifference to great principles of action, and his dislike of change and agitation. He was consequently surrounded by people, whose voices must have occasionally produced a strange discord, that all the gentleness of his nature could scarcely hush. But the most pleasing trait in his private life, is the extraordinary love he bore his sister. She had taken care of his sickly infancy, and in return, he devoted the flower of his life to her comfort and happiness. He abstained from forming any other and closer ties, that he might bestow his undivided care upon the companion of his childhood. How well that high duty was performed, and how justly this beautiful part of his chequered character was appreciated by his friends, is feelingly shown in Sergeant Talfourd's volumes, to which we must now turn our readers' attention.

They are dedicated with great propriety to the surviving sister. The narrative of Lamb's life consists in a brief sketch of his parentage, and of the trifling incidents which diversified his unadventurous career. He was born on the 18th of February, 1775, in the Inner Temple. His parents were in an humble station, but performed with exemplary fidelity the simple duties that belonged to it; his father was in the service of Mr. Salt, one of the benchers of the Inner Temple, to whom he became "his clerk, his good servant, his dresser, his friend, his flapper, his guide, stop-watch, auditor, treasurer." On the 9th of October, 1782, Charles was placed, at the age of seven, as a scholar at Christ's Hospital, where he remained until he had entered his fifteenth year. In November of 1789, he left the school, and lived with his parents, who still resided in the Temple; and soon obtained an appointment in the accountant's office of the East India Company. His small salary was devoted to their comfort; and his recreations were confined to the two shilling gallery of the theatre, and an occasional supper with some of his former schoolmates, one of whom was Coleridge, for whom he had formed an ardent admiration. While Coleridge was at the University, they met, on his visits to London; and after he quitted it, and came to town, Lamb became his associate and disciple, though differing essentially from him in the original bias of his mind.

His first letters were written to Coleridge, who had settled, in 1796, at Bristol. They have but little merit, except as a faithful exhibition of Lamb's feelings at an early period of his life. Their most remarkable characteristic is the strong religious feeling that pervades them; a characteristic which afterwards seems to have disappeared, both from his conversation and correspondence. Both Coleridge and Lamb were then Unitarians. Coleridge afterwards became a virulent hater of opinions he had once cherished, and Lamb seems to have become indifferent to all opinions; at least there is no trace of his early zeal for religion, or of interest in any thing connected with it, to be found in his letters thus far. The faint outline of the curious intellectual character afterwards so fully delineated in his works, is just discernible; but as his years advanced, and his mind matured, his letters became more graphic and vigorous. The circle of his acquaintance with literary men enlarged, and his familiarity with some de-

partments of English poetry increased. He began his career as an author, with a few poetical efforts, which were published conjointly with Lloyd and Coleridge. The joint stock volume was not very well received by the critics or the public. Its success was perhaps fully equal to its merits.

In 1795, Lamb was introduced to Southey, with whom he lived afterwards on the most friendly terms, a single misunderstanding of a moment excepted. His letters to Southey contain the first indications of his genuine humor, and from them we make our first extract.

"My tailor has brought me home a new coat, lapelled, with a velvet collar. He assures me everybody wears velvet collars now. Some are born fashionable, some achieve fashion, and others, like your humble servant, have fashion thrust upon them. The rogue has been making inroads hitherto by modest degrees, foisting upon me an additional button, recommending gaiters, but to come upon me thus in a full tide of luxury, neither becomes him as a tailor or the ninth of a man. My meek gentleman was robbed the other day, coming with his wife and family in a one-horse shay from Hampstead; the villains rifled him of four guineas, some shillings and half-pence, and a bundle of customers' measures, which they swore were bank notes. They did not shoot him, and when they rode off he addressed them with profound gratitude, making a congee; 'Gentlemen, I wish you good night, and we are very much obliged to you that you have not used us ill!' And this is the cuckoo that has had the audacity to foist upon me ten buttons on a side, and a black velvet collar. — A cursed ninth of a scoundrel!"

* * * * *

"When you write to Lloyd, he wishes his Jacobin correspondents to address him as *Mr. C. L.*" — Vol. i. pp. 93, 94.

The following whimsical questions are found in a letter to Southey, dated July 28th, 1798, written on the occasion of Coleridge's departure for Germany, "to be by him defended or oppugned (or both) at Leipsic or Göttingen."

"1. Whether God loves a lying angel better than a true man?

"2. Whether the archangel Uriel *could* knowingly affirm an untruth, and whether, if he *could*, he *would*?

"3. Whether honesty be an angelic virtue, or not rather belonging to that class of qualities which the schoolmen term

'*virtutes minus splendide, et hominis et terræ nimis participes*'?

"4. Whether the *seraphim ardentes* do not manifest their goodness by the way of vision and theory? and whether practice be not a sub-celestial, and merely human virtue?

"5. Whether the higher order of *seraphim illuminati* ever sneer?

"6. Whether pure intelligences can *love*, or whether they can love any thing besides pure intellect?

"7. Whether the beatific vision be any thing more or less than a perpetual representment to each individual angel of his own present attainments, and future capabilities, something in the manner of mortal looking-glasses?

"8. Whether an 'immortal and amenable soul may not come to be *damned at last, and the man never suspect it beforehand*?' " — Vol. 1. pp. 97, 98.

In the year 1799, Lamb became acquainted with Mr. Manning, a mathematical tutor at Cambridge University. His correspondence with this gentleman contains some of the richest and raciest specimens of his humor. In allusion to his friend's project of visiting China, he writes;

"My dear Manning, — The general scope of your letter afforded no indications of insanity, but some particular points raised a scruple. For God's sake don't think any more of 'Independent Tartary.' What are you to do among such Ethiopians? Is there no *lineal descendant* of Prester John? Is the chair empty? Is the sword unswayed? — depend upon it they'll never make you their king, as long as any branch of that great stock is remaining. I tremble for your Christianity. Read Sir John Mandeville's Travels to cure you, or come over to England. There is a Tartar-man now exhibiting at Exeter 'Change. Come and talk with him, and hear what he says first. Indeed, he is no very favorable specimen of his countrymen! But perhaps the best thing you can do, is to *try* to get the idea out of your head. For this purpose repeat to yourself every night, after you have said your prayers, the words, Independent Tartary, Independent Tartary, two or three times, and associate with them the *idea of oblivion*, ('t is Hartley's method with obstinate memories,) or say, Independent, Independent, have I not already got an *independence*? That was a clever way of the old puritans, pun-divinity. My dear friend, think what a sad pity it would be to bury such *parts* in heathen countries, among nasty, un-conversable, horse-belching, Tartar people! Some say, they are Cannibals; and then, conceive a Tartar-fellow *eating* my

friend, and adding the *cool malignity* of mustard and vinegar ! I am afraid 't is the reading of Chaucer has misled you ; his foolish stories about Cambuscan, and the ring, and the horse of brass. Believe me, there are no such things, 't is all the poet's *invention* ; but if there were such darling things as old Chaucer sings, I would *up* behind you on the horse of brass, and frisk off for Prester John's country. But these are all tales ; a horse of brass never flew, and a king's daughter never talked with birds ! The Tartars, really, are a cold, insipid, smouchey set. You 'll be sadly moped (if you are not eaten) among them. Pray *try*, and cure yourself. Take hellebore (the counsel is Horace's, 't was none of my thought *originally*). Shave yourself oftener. Eat no saffron, for saffron-eaters contract a terrible Tartar-like yellow. Pray, to avoid the fiend. Eat nothing that gives the heart-burn. *Shave the upper lip*. Go about like an European. Read no books of voyages (they are nothing but lies), only now and then a romance to keep the fancy *under*. Above all, don't go to any sights of *wild beasts*. *That has been your ruin*. Accustom yourself to write familiar letters, on common subjects, to your friends in England, such as are of a moderate understanding. And think about common things more. I supped last night with Rickman, and met a merry *natural* captain, who pleases himself vastly with once having made a pun at Otaheite in the Otaheite language.* 'T is the same man who said Shakspeare he liked, because he was so *much of the gentleman*. Rickman is a man 'absolute in all numbers.' I think I may one day bring you acquainted, if you do not go to Tartary first ; for you 'll never come back. Have a care, my dear friend, of Anthropophagi ! their stomachs are always craving. 'T is terrible to be weighed out at five pence a-pound. To sit at table (the reverse of fishes in Holland), not as a guest, but as a meat.

"God bless you : do come to England. Air and exercise may do great things. Talk with some minister. Why not your father ?

"God dispose all for the best. I have discharged my duty.

"Your sincere friend,

"C. LAMB."

Vol. I. pp. 245 - 248.

* Captain, afterwards Admiral Burney, who became one of the most constant attendants on Lamb's parties, and whose son, Martin, grew up in his strongest regard, and received the honor of the dedication of the second volume of his works."

Writing to Mr. Manning, after his departure, he thus describes his reception as a dramatic author.

"So I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury-lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Hang 'em how they hissed! it was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring sometimes like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes snakes, that hissed me into madness. 'T was like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favorite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely, to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with, and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labors of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them! Heaven be pleased to make the teeth rot out of them all, therefore! Make them a reproach, and all that pass by them to loll out their tongue at them!" — Vol. I. pp. 303, 304.

The following amusing play upon his own name, is in a letter to the same gentleman, of a subsequent date.

"I continue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honor; and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the King, who is the fountain of honor. — As at first, 1. Mr. C. Lamb; 2. C. Lamb, Esq.; 3. Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4. Baron Lamb of Stamford; * 5. Viscount Lamb; 6. Earl Lamb; 7. Marquis Lamb; 8. Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country, otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent, higher than which is nothing. Puns I have not made many, (nor punch much) since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me

"* Where my family came from. I have chosen that, if ever I should have my choice."

that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral, upon which I remarked, that they must be very sharp set." — Vol. I. pp. 313, 314.

The correspondence in the second volume is richer in excellent matter than the first, embracing letters to Wordsworth, Coleridge, Manning, and several friends, whose acquaintance he successively formed. The following curious epistle was written to Manning on Christmas day, picturing "their common friends as in a melancholy future."

"Dear old friend and absentee, — This is Christmas-day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolkian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment, from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity? — 't is our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of Christmas; faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery, — I feel, I feel myself refreshed with the thought, — my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas, — down with the idols, — Ching-chong-fo, — and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

"Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed; your friends have all got old, — those you left blooming, — myself (who am one of the few that remember you) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years, — she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant-maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended

to my acquaintance : it was long before I had the most distant recognition of her ; but at last together we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's church is a heap of ruins ; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous ; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither, — and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a —, or a —. For aught I see, you had almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Strulbug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face ; all your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all, is, I believe, the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

“ Poor Godwin ! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate church-yard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss —, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamors, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness, — but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to nature but a week or two before, — poor Col., but two days before he died, he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the ‘ Wanderings of Cain,’ in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism, metaphysics, and divinity, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends, — benefited your country ; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will shake withered hands together, and talk of old things, — of St. Mary's church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crips, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruit-

erer's shop in Trumpington Street, and for aught I know resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely, but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make." — Vol. II. pp. 18 – 22.

In a letter addressed to Coleridge, the reader of "*Elia*" will be amused with the first outline of the *Essay on Roast Pig*.

"Dear C. — It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well, — they are interesting creatures at a certain age, — what a pity such buds should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon! You had all some of the crackling, — and brain sauce, — did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently dredge it a little, just before the crisis? Did the eyes come away kindly, with no *Œdipean* avulsion? Was the crackling the color of the ripe pomegranate? Had you no cursed compliment of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it? Not that I sent the pig, nor can form the remotest guess what part *O*—— could play in the business. I never knew him give any thing away in my life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me; but at the unlucky juncture of time being absent, the present somehow went round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things I could never think of sending away. Teals, widgeons, snipes, barn-door-fowl, ducks, geese, — your tame villalio things, — Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere, — where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity, there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, if in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift. One of the bitterest pangs I ever felt of remorse was when a child, — my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through the Borough, I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, — but there-

abouts ; a look-beggar, not a verbal petitioner ; and in the coxcombrty of taught-charity, I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me ; the sum it was to her ; the pleasure she had a right to expect that I, — not the old impostor, — should take in eating her cake ; the cursed ingratitude by which, under the color of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like, — and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been masticated, consigned to dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

“ But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit of the donor's purpose.

“ Yours (short of pig) to command in every thing.” — Vol. II. pp. 70 – 73.

Among Lamb's most valued friends was Bernard Barton, the Quaker Poet. The following singular letter, was addressed to that gentleman, on the fate of Fauntleroy.

“ And now, my dear Sir, trifling apart, the gloomy catastrophe of yesterday morning prompts a sadder vein. The fate of the unfortunate Fauntleroy makes me, whether I will or no, to cast reflecting eyes around on such of my friends as, by a parity of situation, are exposed to a similarity of temptation. My very style seems to myself to become more impressive than usual, with the charge of them. Who that standeth, knoweth but he may yet fall ? Your hands as yet, I am most willing to believe, have never deviated into other's property. You think it impossible that you could ever commit so heinous an offence ; but so thought Fauntleroy once ; so have thought many besides him, who at last have expiated as he hath done. You are as yet upright ; but you are a banker, or at least the next thing to it. I feel the delicacy of the subject ; but cash must pass through your hands, sometimes to a great amount. If in an unguarded hour ——— but I will hope better. Consider the scandal it will bring upon those of your persuasion. Thousands would go to see a Quaker hanged, that would be indifferent to the fate of a Presbyterian or an Anabaptist. Think of the effect it would have on the sale of your poems alone, not to mention higher considerations ! I tremble, I am sure, at myself, when I think that so many poor victims of the law, at one time of their

life, made as sure of never being hanged, as I, in my own presumption, am ready, too ready, to do myself. What are we better than they? Do we come into the world with different necks? Is there any distinctive mark under our left ears? Are we unstrangulable, I ask you? Think on these things. I am shocked sometimes at the shape of my own fingers, not for their resemblance to the ape tribe (which is something), but for the exquisite adaptation of them to the purposes of picking, finger-ing, &c." — Vol. II. pp. 168, 169.

A letter to Mr. Gilman, a common friend of Coleridge and himself, contains a well-merited and amusing hit at the would-be philosopher's vagaries.

"I was over St. Luke's the other day with my friend Tuthill, and mightily pleased with one of his contrivances for the comfort and amelioration of the students. They have double cells, in which a pair may lie feet to feet horizontally, and chat the time away as rationally as they can. It must certainly be more sociable for them these warm, raving nights. The right-hand truckle in one of these friendly recesses, at present vacant, was preparing, I understood, for Mr. Irving. Poor fellow! it is time he removed from Pentonville. I followed him as far as to Highbury the other day, with a mob at his heels, calling out upon Ermigiddon, who I suppose is some Scotch moderator. He squinted out his favorite eye last Friday, in the fury of possession, upon a poor woman's shoulders that was crying matches, and has not missed it. The companion truck, as far as I could measure it with my eye, would conveniently fit a person about the length of Coleridge, allowing for a reasonable drawing up of the feet, not at all painful. Does he talk of moving this quarter? You and I have too much sense to trouble ourselves with revelations; marry, to the same in Greek, you may have something professionally to say. Tell C. that he was to come and see us some fine day. Let it be before he moves, for in his new quarters he will necessarily be confined in his conversation to his brother prophet. Conceive the two Rabbis foot to foot, for there are no Gamaliels there to affect a humbler posture! All are masters in that Patmos, where the law is perfect equality; Latmos, I should rather say, for they will be Luna's twin darlings; her affection will be ever at the full. Well; keep *your* brains moist with gooseberry this mad March, for the devil of exposition seeketh dry places." — Vol. II. pp. 267 – 269.

One passage more, and we have done. It is the last Essay of Elia, as well as our last extract. It was written in ac-

knowledge of a present of game from some unknown admirer.

"We love to have our friend in the country sitting thus at our table *by proxy*; to apprehend his presence (though a hundred miles may be between us) by a turkey, whose goodly aspect reflects to us his 'plump corpusculum'; to taste him in grouse or woodcock; to feel him gliding down in the toast peculiar to the latter; to incorporate him in a slice of Canterbury brawn. This is indeed to have him within ourselves; to know him intimately; such participation is methinks *unitive*, as the old theologians phrase it."

"Elia presents his acknowledgments to his 'Correspondent unknown,' for a basket of prodigiously fine game. He takes for granted that so amiable a character must be a reader of the *Athenæum*, else he had meditated a notice in 'The Times.' Now if this friend had consulted the Delphic oracle for a present suited to the palate of Elia, he could not have hit upon a morsel so acceptable. The birds he is barely thankful for; pheasants are poor *fowls* disguised in fine feathers. But a hare roasted hard and brown, with gravy and melted butter! — old Mr. Chambers, the sensible clergyman in Warwickshire, whose son's acquaintance has made many hours happy in the life of Elia, used to allow a pound of Epping to every hare. Perhaps that was over-doing it. But, in spite of the note of Philomel, who, like some fine poets, that think no scorn to adopt plagiarisms from a humble brother, reiterates every spring her cuckoo cry of 'Jug, Jug, Jug,' Elia pronounces that a hare, to be truly palated, must be roasted. Jugging sophisticates her. In *our* way it eats so 'crips,' as Mrs. Minikin says. Time was, when Elia was not arrived at his taste, that he preferred to all luxuries a roasted pig. But he disclaims all such green-sickness appetites in future, though he hath to acknowledge the receipt of many a delicacy in that kind from correspondents, — good, but mistaken men, — in consequence of their erroneous supposition, that he had carried up into mature life the prepossessions of childhood. From the worthy Vicar of Enfield he acknowledges a tithe contribution of extraordinary sapor. The ancients must have loved hares. Else why adopt the word *lepores* (obviously from *lepus*) but for some subtle analogy between the delicate flavor of the latter, and the finer relishes of wit in what we most poorly translate *pleasantries*. The fine madnesses of the poet are the very decoction of his diet. Thence is he hare-brained. Harum-scarum is a libellous unfounded phrase, of modern usage. 'T is true the hare is the most circumspect of

animals, sleeping with her eye open. Her ears, ever erect, keep them in that wholesome exercise, which conduces them to form the very tit-bit of the admirers of this noble animal. Noble will I call her, in spite of her detractors, who, from occasional demonstrations of the principle of self-preservation (common to all animals), infer in her a defect of heroism. Half a hundred horsemen, with thrice the number of dogs, scour the country in pursuit of puss across three counties; and because the well-flavored beast, weighing the odds, is willing to evade the hue and cry, with her delicate ears shrinking perchance from discord, — comes the grave naturalist, Linnæus perchance, or Buffon, and gravely sets down the hare as a — timid animal. Why Achilles, or Bully Dawson, would have declined the preposterous combat.

“ In fact, how light of digestion we feel after a hare ! How tender its processes after swallowing ! What chyle it promotes ! How ethereal ! as if its living celerity were a type of its nimble coursing through the animal juices. The notice might be longer. It is intended less as a Natural History of the Hare, than a cursory thanks to the country ‘good Unknown.’ The hare has many friends, but none sincerer than

“ ELIA.”

Vol. II. pp. 306 – 309.

There is one part of Lamb's private life, which Mr. Talfourd glosses over more indulgently than most of his readers will approve. The intemperate use of intoxicating liquors has been often laid to his charge, and the charge seems fully proved ; but Mr. Talfourd hides the vice under such gentle names as “genial frailty,” a tenderness which neither respect for the memory of the dead, nor the natural partiality of a friendly biographer, can wholly excuse. It would have been enough to state the fact, and leave the readers to think of it as they might. He was not bound harshly to condemn ; but it would have been in better taste to abstain from all attempt at palliation.
